

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS  
HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Species: Mule Deer  
Region: 3  
Hunting District: 300  
Year: 2015

1. Describe the proposed season / quota changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.)

Issue 75 300-00 Mule Deer B licenses.

Table 1. Hunting District 300 permit history, 2000-2014

Time Period	B Licenses	Buck Permits
2000	25	40
2001	50	40
2002-2008	150	40
2009	75	30
2010	50	30
2011-2012	100	30
2013	75	30
2014	0	30

Hunting District 300 has been a special buck management district since 1998.

2. Why is the proposed change necessary?

The proposed change is based on an Adaptive Harvest Management review for Mountain-Foothill habitat. The Lima Peaks and Big Sheep Creek areas have heavy wildlife browsing on certain shrub and deciduous species and a long-term history of habitat conversion or control on browse species.

3. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).

The Adaptive Harvest Management review for Hunting District 300 shows the population is within the parameters for the Mountain-Foothill habitat type. The current population is 81% of the long term average as measured on the Little Sheep Creek trend area. Fawn recruitment has averaged 36 fawns per 100 adults since 1992 and has only been below the threshold 2 years, following the 1996 deer die-off (Table 4).

Buck harvest has been regulated by special permit since the district was designated a special management unit in 1998. Reported buck harvest (Table 2) routinely exceeds the number of permits issued and this issue is caused by general assignment to Hunting District 300 by hunters that are not familiar with the various districts in Region 3. Illegal harvest in the Lima Peaks is also common. Post season mule deer buck ratios (Table 3) average 18 per 100 does since 1998, and have not been below the threshold of 10:100 since 1999. Mule deer doe harvest has been moderate in the area for the last 20 years, with a range from 0 to 57 and an average of 31.

Table 2. Hunting District 300 Mule Deer Harvest history and total deer hunters, 1996-2013.

YEAR	HUNTERS	A-	A+	TOTAL	% BOW	%>= 4 PT.
1996	477	13	80	92		
1997	428	48	53	101		
1998	300	13	21	34		
1999	163	0	30	30		
2000	252	0	73	73		
2001	340	21	44	66	8	
2002	415	53	32	85	0	73
2003	394	53	40	93	0	56
2004	299	32	37	70	6	68
2005	358	57	46	103	8	63
2006	318	45	67	113	4	45
2007	418	46	49	95	3	82
2008	565	56	63	119	0	48
2009	467	29	56	85	0	59
2010	417	22	45	67	0	76
2011	407	20	32	52	11	59
2012		28	36	65	8	70
2013	336	27	27	54	6	74

Table 3. Hunting District 300 post-season parameters, 1998-2013.

YEAR	BUCKS:100 DOES	FAWN:100 DOES
1998	8	42
1999	4	49
2000	13	63
2001	13	48
2002	13	46
2003	15.6	55
2004	29	54
2005	18	44
2006	16	41
2007	17	62
2008	18	53
2009	13	33
2010	36	38
2011	31	52

2012	27	67
2013	20	41

Table 4. Hunting District 300 spring greenup survey population parameters, 1992-2013.

YEAR	TOTAL MULE DEER	RECRUITMENT
1992	695	33
1995	457	20
1996	427	19
1997	410	16
1998	433	42
1999	479	57
2000	469	60
2001	646	49
2002	505	56
2003	238	46
2004	368	25
2005	394	26
2006	497	39
2007	403	28
2008	198	24
2009	152	30
2010	139	23.5
2011	197	45
2012	229	35
2013	309	39

4. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, temperature / precipitation information).

Mountain Mahogany is an important winter browse for mule deer in the Lima Peaks and Big Sheep Creek drainages. The shrub is showing widespread evidence of intense over-browsing by both mule deer and moose. In many cases mature mahogany offers no available browse for wildlife and in other cases the plants have retrogressed to the snowline. Concerted efforts to balance the moose and deer populations with available forage are an important tool in maintaining a healthy deer population, in balance with the carrying capacity of the land.

Mule deer in the Lima Peaks are highly migratory. A portion of the population winters in adjacent Idaho, while the balance migrate north and east into the Little Sheep and Big

Sheep drainages. Timing of surveys is critical as deer leave winter range early in the spring. Access to the mule deer resource is very good and travel, particularly by OHVs is a major concern in some areas of the district.

5. Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).

The Dillon area public is both concerned and split over mule deer doe harvest. The public is very protective of the limited entry mule deer buck opportunity in the Lima Peaks. With that concern is a vocal minority of the public that desires no doe hunting as a means to promote larger, older bucks. Another segment of the public desires the opportunity to harvest a mule deer doe. The Skyline Sportsmen have been opposed to all mule deer doe hunting for a long time.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_Craig Fager\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_09/25/2014\_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name / Date

Reason for Modification:

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS  
HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Species: Mule Deer  
Region: 3  
Hunting District: 331  
Year: 2015

1. Describe the proposed season / quota changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.)

Issue 200 331-00 mule deer B licenses.

Table 1. Hunting District 331 mule deer B licenses issued, 1997-2014

Time Period	B Licenses
1997-2002	25
2003-2006	150
2007-2013	250
2014	0

Mule deer in Hunting District 331 are currently regulated through a 6-week either-sex archery season and a 5-week antlered buck season.

2. Why is the proposed change necessary?

The proposed change is based on an Adaptive Harvest Management review for Mountain-Foothill habitat, discussed further below. The East Pioneers are also the focus of intense habitat restoration work and wildlife browse restoration.

3. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).

The Adaptive Harvest Management review for Hunting District 331 shows the population is with 7% of the long-term spring recruitment average of 475 mule deer. Annual fawn recruitment has exceeded the threshold of 20 fawns per 100 adults for eighteen consecutive years, has only been below this threshold once since 1994 and averages 38.5 since 1994. Buck doe ratios average 14.9 per 100 does, based on post season surveys since 1998.

Estimated mule deer harvest averaged 105 does, 235 bucks and 341 total from 2001 to 2013. Mule deer are highly migratory and fall conditions make for quite variable buck harvest as a result. Mule deer buck harvest ranged from 130 to 342 in a four year period between 2006 and 2009. Mule deer doe harvest is much more stable, ranging from 105 to

128 with 250 B licenses from 2007 to 2013. Thirty percent of the annual estimated harvest is 4 point or better in the district. Archers accounted for 1 to 4% of the annual harvest.

Table 2. Hunting District 331 hunter numbers and mule deer harvest, 2001-2013.

YEAR	HUNTERS	ANTLERLESS	ANTLERED	TOTAL HARVEST
2001	1467	15	217	232
2002	1402	99	237	337
2003	1541	94	309	403
2004	1658	142	241	384
2005	1415	105	286	392
2006	1496	91	342	434
2007	1337	121	208	332
2008	1263	121	198	319
2009	1287	112	130	241
2010	1349	117	194	321
2011	1401	128	206	334
2012		115	248	363
2013		105	243	347

Table 3. Post season mule deer population parameters, 1998-2014.

YEAR	BUCKS:100 DOES	FAWNS:100 DOES
1998	18	43
1999	20	68
2000	18	63
2001	12	61
2002	12	53
2003	15	58
2004	5.6	48
2005	11	46
2006	21	55
2007	7.5	54
2008	11	39
2009	18	45
2010	10	41
2011	21	38
2012	26	65
2013	18	40
2014	10	48

Table 4. Hunting District 331 spring greenup survey summary, 1994-2014.

YEAR	TOTAL MULE DEER	RECRUITMENT Fawn:100 Adult
1994	579	37
1995	623	20
1996	500	19
1997	491	25
1998	525	32
1999	602	71
2000	653	56
2001	492	57
2002	538	52
2003	478	55
2004	460	37
2005	531	26
2006	498	39
2007	355	39
2008	706	27
2009	319	35
2010	345	22
2012	277	28
2013	87	46
2014	444	47

4. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, temperature / precipitation information).

Mountain mahogany is a primary browse species for mule deer and moose in the East Pioneers. The species has been heavily impacted by browsing and the 100 plus year history of fire suppression on the landscape. Mahogany has been degraded to the point that it no longer can sustain wildlife, reproduce or grow beyond the reach of browsing animals. Other communities like aspen, willow and sage brush have also been similarly impacted. FWP is working with the US Forest Service and BLM to implement landscape level treatments to improve communities for the benefit of wildlife and other land uses. A few projects have been implemented, with limited success to this point. Large projects like the Trapper Creek Vegetation project has been in the works since 2008 and been repeatedly litigated and appealed.

Much of the Pioneer landscape is very arid and falls within an 11 to 13 annual precipitation zone. The margins between a good and poor growing season are largely driven by timely precipitation events. Mule Deer B licenses are a critical tool to help manage available browse and condition going forward. Prior to the removal of B

licenses for the 2014 season, FWP was contemplating a move to either-sex hunting for mule deer or further liberalization of B licenses. Antlerless moose opportunity was also increased substantially based on moose damage complaints and browse concerns.

5. Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).

Hunting District 331 is subject to periodic game damage complaints in the vicinity of Argenta, Melrose and Divide. These situations are generally addressed by the general season, including directing B license holders to affected areas, and haystack fencing. Game damage seasons have been periodically employed to address problems. Moose Creek Hill on Interstate 15 is a chronic area for mule deer-vehicle collisions as deer cross from the Highlands to the Pioneers.

Hunters are generally satisfied with the mule deer opportunity in the Pioneers. There is a contingent of hunters that would like to see improvement in the older buck component of the population. Some members of the Beaverhead Outdoors would like to see a validation system that limits mule deer opportunity geographically and distributes hunters. The Skyline Sportsmen are generally opposed to hunting doe mule deer.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_Craig Fager\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_September 23, 2014 \_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name / Date

Reason for Modification:



**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS**  
**HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**Species: MD**

**Region: 6**

**Hunting District: All Region 6 Districts except HD 652**

**Year: 2015**

- 1. Describe the proposed season / quotas changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.).**

Region 6 wildlife and enforcement staff proposes to re-establish either-sex mule deer general and archery only seasons for all region 6 hunting districts (except HD 652), which is the standard mule deer hunting regulation under Montana's Adaptive Harvest Management for Mule Deer (AHM).

The 2014 general and archery mule deer seasons were buck only, except HD 652 which is by permit. The period from 2003 and 2013, all Region 6 HDs (except HD 652) have been either-sex mule deer on a general license. Mule deer B-licenses have also been available by HD across the region, ranging from 1,850 in 2003 to 6,575 in 2009. No mule deer B-licenses are recommended in this proposal.

- 2. What is the objective of this proposed change? This could be a specific harvest amount or resulting population level or number of game damage complaints, etc.**

Objective 1: Manage mule deer populations within the range of 20% above and 30% below the long-term average as stated under AHM.

Objective 2: Increase consistency, improve enforceability and simplify deer hunting regulations.

- 3. How will the success of this proposal be measured? This could be annual game or harvest surveys, game damage complaints, etc.**

Trends in mule deer populations are monitored by completing post-season and spring aerial surveys on eleven mule deer trend areas across the region. Total number of mule deer observed, as well as fawn ratios from these surveys, are measured against population objectives within AHM to determine population status and trend of mule deer across the region as well as within hunting districts.

Secondarily, harvest surveys provide harvest estimates across the region as well as by hunting district. Mule deer harvest estimates provide another measure of population level and availability of mule deer for harvest, as well as prior year removal from the population and effectiveness of season types.

- 4. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).**

Region 6 mule deer populations as indicated by spring 2014 surveys on the eleven trend areas is 10% below the long-term average (1998-2014) and fawn ratios were 57 fawns:100 adults. Mule deer buck harvest in 2013 was at the long-term average (1998-2013).

Table 1. Region 6 mule deer spring surveys results and prior year harvest data from the last 5 years relative to AHM objectives.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	AHM Objective (standard)
# mule deer on DTAs (% of ave.)	0% (at ave)	+20%	-20%	+20%	-10%	Between 20% above to 30% below
Fawns:100 adults	43	50	50	63	57	30 – 60
Prior year buck harvest (% of ave.)	+14%	0% (at ave)	-13%	-1%	0% (at ave)	± 25%

5. **Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors, public or private land use or resident and nonresident hunting opportunity that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, and temperature / precipitation information).**

Habitat and weather conditions have been favorable for mule deer since 2011 across much of the region and mule deer populations have generally been recovering from the winter of 2010/2011. Winters have been mild and adequate to above average precipitation has created good-excellent habitat conditions. These habitat conditions have resulted in improved fawn recruitment during the last two springs. Recruitment of mule deer fawns in 2013 and 2014 was 63 and 57 fawns:100 adults respectively, as compared to an average of 53 fawns:100 adults. Incidental sightings of mule deer fawns during 2014 antelope surveys and other field work has indicated widespread twining of mule deer fawns which will likely result in an increase in fawn recruitment and population growth over the next year.

6. **Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).**

During the 2014 season setting process comments were heard from sportsmen concerned that the buck only regulation will increase hunting pressure and harvest on mule deer bucks, ultimately reducing buck numbers.

Landowners are currently experiencing only localized game damage in some areas, but mule deer numbers are recovering fairly quickly in much of the region. Landowner discussions over the last year generally prefer season types that allow for flexibility in deer harvest on private property.

Submitted by: Scott Thompson-Malta area wildlife biologist

Date: 9/25/14

Approved: Tom Flowers 9/30/14  
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name / Date

Reason for Modification:

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS**  
**HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**Species:** Mule Deer -antlerless

**Region:** 7

**Hunting District:** 700,701,702,703,704,705

**Year:** 2015

**1. Describe the proposed season / quotas changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.).**

Establish hunting district specific mule deer B-licenses in Region 7 to put in place the tools for population management and for addressing game damage. The number of B-licenses issued for the 2015 hunting season would depend upon the spring 2015 mule deer survey results. **If the spring 2015 surveys show deer numbers below long-term average in a hunting district then no b-licenses would be issued for that district.** If the population in a hunting district is at or above long-term average then the number of b-licenses issued would be on a sliding scale and the number issued would depend upon how much above long-term average the population is. All proposals will be publically vetted.

The sliding scale for issuing B-licenses proposed here will be based on the spring 2015 deer survey results coupled with a varying percentage of past B-license sales. FWP's Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) guidelines for mule deer say that if the number of deer counted on a survey areas is 70% - 120% of the long-term average (i.e. meeting the "Standard" season package criteria), then the number of B-licenses issued should range from none up to no more than one half of the number issued under a "Liberal" season package. For reference, during this past 2014 hunting season five of the six hunting districts in Region 7 fell within standard season package criteria, while one district, 702, fell within the restrictive package. However, all hunting district season types in the regulations for the 2014 season were of the restrictive package type – buck-only on the general license and no B-licenses. For purposes of this proposal, 2007 to 2009 were liberal season package years and give us a way to calculate how many B-Licenses to issue. During those years B-licenses were valid region-wide and an average of 10,900 was sold. So one half of 10,900 is 5,450 and represents the maximum number of B-licenses that could be issued region-wide with this proposal. We used the sliding scale shown in Table 1 to generate the number of B-licenses for the entire region varying from 0 to 50% of the number issued during liberal season package years and based upon deer numbers between 70% and 120% of the long-term average. Note especially that if deer numbers are below average, i.e. less than 100% of average, then no B-licenses would be issued. Typically, hunter success rate with mule deer B-licenses averages less than 50 percent.

**Table 1.** Scales used to calculate the number of B-licenses to issue based on deer counted on survey areas relative to the long-term average and the corresponding percentage of the "Liberal" package number of licenses sold based on 10,900 licenses sold during Liberal package years 2007-2009.

Deer Numbers relative to Long-Term Average	Percent of "Liberal" Package B-License Numbers to be Considered	Number of B-Licenses Proposed Region-Wide
110% - 120%	50%	5,450
100% - 109%	40%	4,360
90% - 99%	30%	No B-Licenses would be proposed if deer numbers are below average
80% - 89%	20%	
70% - 79%	10%	
<70%	0%	

B-licenses from 2007 to 2009 were valid region-wide and not specific to a particular hunting district. For this proposal, the number of B-licenses that would be apportioned to an individual hunting district

is based on the percent of the regional mule deer doe harvest that particular district accounted for between 2007 and 2009. The resulting proposed numbers of B-licenses vary by district from 500 to 900 if deer surveys are 100% - 109% of average and 600 to 1,150 if deer surveys are 110% - 120% of average (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Region 7 Hunting District long-term average percent of region-wide mule deer harvest and proposed allocation of B-licenses.

Hunting District	Average Percent of Regional MD Doe Harvest	Number of B-Licenses to Issue if Deer Surveys are 100% - 109% of Average (4,360 for the Region)	Number of B-Licenses to Issue if Deer Surveys are 110% - 120% of Average (5,450 for the Region)
700	17%	750	950
701	14%	600	750
702	11%	500	600
703	17%	750	900
704	20%	850	1100
705	21%	900	1150

**2. What is the objective of the proposed change? This could be a specific harvest amount or resulting population level or number of game damage complaints, etc.**

OBJECTIVE I: Manage mule deer populations within 70% to 120% of the long-term average as per the Adaptive Harvest Management guidelines for the Prairie/Breaks Management Unit.

See the discussion below under number 4 pertaining to the current population's status in relation to the management objectives.

OBJECTIVE II: Minimize game damage complaints. Provide the tools for landowners to manage deer on their properties.

With 75% of the region in private ownership this proposal provides landowners with the tools to manage for acceptable deer numbers on their property using general season public harvest. Currently mule deer damage complaints are at a minimum with 2 received this fiscal year. However, with increasing deer numbers and depending on winter conditions we anticipate a concomitant increase in damage complaints. By increasing antlerless harvest opportunity in 2015 we provide an excellent proactive tool for minimizing game damage.

**3. How will success of this proposal be measured? Could be annual game or harvest surveys, game damage complaints, etc.**

Post season and spring aerial surveys are conducted annually on 13 mule deer trend areas across the region. These have all been flown consistently since 1998 and some as far back as 1977. Total numbers observed as well as fawn recruitment from these surveys are measured against the Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) population objectives for the Prairie/Breaks Management Unit to determine population status and trend across the region.

Check stations conducted during the hunting season provide valuable hunter based information on localized deer numbers, harvest location and age of harvested animals. Annual harvest surveys provide estimates of harvest location and season (harvest) effectiveness.

Ongoing discussions with landowners across the region relative to what they are observing for wildlife populations and continual monitoring of damage complaints are valuable tools to assess deer numbers and efficacy of harvest prescriptions.

**4. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).**

Mule deer population status and trends are monitored through aerial surveys on 13 trend areas across the region with each hunting district having one to four of these trend areas. Our objective is to manage mule deer populations within 70% to 120% of the long-term average in accordance with the Adaptive Harvest Management guidelines for the Prairie/Breaks Management Unit.

Mule deer in Region 7 have been, and appear to be continuing, on a strong recovery from their low point in 2012. At their low point populations were 61% of long term average, but by the spring of 2014 they were back up to 92% (Table 3). Population recovery varied across the region from hunting district 702 at 59% of long term average to hunting district 705 at 114% of long-term average.

**Table 3.** Region 7 mule deer surveys by Hunting District (HD) and Trend Area showing 2014 surveys, the 10-year long term average (LTA), and 2014 as a percent of LTA.

Area	Statistics	Trend Area			Total for HD	
HD 700		Smokey	Haxby	Devils		
	2014 Surveys	315	135	374	824	
	10-year LTA	344	189	448	981	
	2014 as % of LTA	94%	72%	84%	84%	
HD 701		Hay	Cherry			
	2014 Surveys	302	155		457	
	10-year LTA	311	187		498	
	2014 as % of LTA	97%	83%		92%	
HD 702		Sarpy				
	2014 Surveys	171			171	
	10-year LTA	291			291	
	2014 as % of LTA	59%			59%	
HD 703		Bloomfield	Cherry			
	2014 Surveys	67	155		222	
	10-year LTA	99	187		286	
	2014 as % of LTA	68%	83%		78%	
HD 704		Otter	Olive	Harding		
	2014 Surveys	134	454	474	1062	
	10-year LTA	98	633	363	1094	
	2014 as % of LTA	136%	72%	134%	97%	
HD 705		Horse	Tie	Brewer	Harding	
	2014 Surveys	189	102	103	474	868
	10-year LTA	196	112	88	363	759
	2014 as % of LTA	97%	91%	117%	134%	114%
Region 7 Total	2014 Surveys					3604
	10-year LTA					3909
	2014 as % of LTA					92%

Of equal importance to the rebound in mule deer populations is the change in population age structure. Before the back-to-back tough winters of 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 mule deer age class structure was skewed towards older, less productive animals. In recent years this has been replaced by a more "normal" age structure consisting of younger, more productive animals. This is apparent in the

recruitment (last year's fawns that survive the winter and enter the breeding population - spring surveys are flown before the current year's fawn crop hits the ground) seen on spring surveys. In the spring of 2012 recruitment was 47 fawns per 100 adults. This was followed by 53 fawns per 100 adults in 2013 and 61 fawns per 100 adults in 2014. Those spring 2014 recruitment surveys ranged from a low of 44 to an encouraging high of 76 fawns per 100 adults. Also, based on field observations this fall, there was excellent current-year fawn production. During a recent fall survey in Garfield County 82 fawns of the year per 100 adult mule deer were observed. Indications are that the spring 2015 surveys will show another year of excellent recruitment, and that most, if not all, hunting districts will be at or above long term average. With these upward population trends in mind and the forecast for continued increases, the region feels it is prudent and responsible to move forward with antlerless mule deer proposals for the 2015 season. In order to maintain deer within the objective range antlerless harvest needs to incrementally increase starting in the fall of 2015 rather than wait another year to institute doe harvest when the likely result would be much larger quota increases two years hence

5. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors that have relevance **to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, and temperature / precipitation information).**

Habitat and weather conditions over the past several years have allowed for the rapid recovery of mule deer numbers across the region. Two strong young age classes have been recruited into the breeding population with a third strong age class anticipated next year. Anecdotal field reports and observations plus a fall survey in Garfield County, cited above, indicate widespread presence of mule deer does with twins at heel. Abundant moisture has been and continues to be received producing excellent forage conditions for mule deer. Low deer numbers over the past several years have allowed winter browse forage plants to recover to support and maintain deer numbers. Managing deer numbers through harvest will assist in maintaining deer numbers at levels these plant communities can support.

6. **Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).**

Ongoing conversations with landowners across the region indicate awareness of increasing mule deer numbers with some expression of concern going forward about the inability to manage deer because of the lack of suitable management tools like B-licenses. We hear comments like, "with no doe tags available what do I do about deer in my hay stacks?" Landowners across the region generally prefer the flexibility of adjusting doe harvest on their land, or have no doe harvest, as they see fit.

Submitted by: John Ensign

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name / Date

Reason for Modification: